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THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-sixth year

Letter dated 23 October 1991 from the Permanent Representatives of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the United States-Soviet joint statement on Afghanistan passed in Moscow on 13 September 1991 after the talks between United States Secretary of State James A. Baker III, and USSR Foreign Minister Boris D. Pankin (annex I), as well as the text of the commentary on this statement by the United States Secretary of State and the USSR Foreign Minister (annex II).

We should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 29, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Thomas R. PICKERING
Permanent Representative of
the United States of America
to the United Nations

(Signed) Yuli M. VORONTSOV
Permanent Representative of
the Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics to the United Nations

ANNEX I

United States-Soviet joint statement on Afghanistan

The United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, consistent with the United Nations General Assembly resolutions adopted at the forty-third, forty-fourth and forty-fifth sessions and with their commitment to the Geneva Accords on Afghanistan, recognize the fundamental right of the Afghan people to determine their own destiny free from outside interference. In this regard, they support the statement of the United Nations Secretary-General dated 21 May 1991, and reaffirm the need for a political settlement in Afghanistan that ensures an independent and non-aligned Afghanistan at peace with its neighbours and that establishes a new, broad-based government through an electoral process that respects Afghan political and Islamic traditions. The United States and the USSR agree that a transition period is required to reach these goals.

To this end, they call for and pledge to support a democratic and free electoral process that is not subject to manipulation or interference by anyone. The results of the electoral process must be respected and fully implemented by all. They request the United Nations, with the support of concerned Governments, including those of Islamic countries, to work with the Afghans to convene a credible and impartial transition mechanism whose functions would include directing and managing a credible electoral process fully consistent with these principles. This transition mechanism, working closely with the United Nations and others as necessary, would have independent authority with all powers required to prepare for, conduct and implement the results of this electoral process leading to the establishment of a new government that will have the broad support of the Afghan people. The details of these and other powers and functions would be decided through an intra-Afghan dialogue.

The United States and the USSR agree that a cessation of hostilities is essential for the peaceful conduct of elections during the transition period and for a lasting political settlement. To facilitate this cessation, they agree to discontinue their weapons deliveries to all Afghan sides. They also agree that a cease-fire and a cut-off of weapons deliveries from all other sources should follow this step. They agree further to work towards withdrawal of major weapons systems from Afghanistan.

The United States and the USSR also reiterate their commitment to support an international humanitarian assistance effort to promote the prompt repatriation of refugees and reconstruction of Afghanistan.

To these ends, they reaffirm their willingness to promote in every way possible the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General to contribute in practical ways to the early settlement of this conflict.

ANNEX II

Commentary on the joint Soviet-United States statement on Afghanistan

Today, the USSR and the United States issued a joint statement on Afghanistan specifying agreed approaches of the sides to a political settlement in that country along the lines of the United Nations Secretary-General's statement of 21 May 1991.

Settlement of the issue of "negative symmetry", that is discontinuation of Soviet and United States arms supplies to the conflicting Afghan sides, is one of the crucial elements of this agreement. The USSR and the United States agreed to cut off such supplies beginning 1 January 1992. They further agreed that neither the USSR nor the United States will intensify arms supplies to any Afghan side in the interim. It is also hoped that during the remaining time the issue of the Soviet prisoners of war (POWs) will be settled. The United States pledges its best efforts to resolve this important humanitarian question.

It is also expected that other countries involved in the Afghan conflict should also follow the USSR and the United States in limiting their assistance to Afghanistan to humanitarian assistance only.

We expect that our joint steps will facilitate launching an intra-Afghan negotiating process and should lead to a pause followed by a complete cessation of military operations.